

Elliston, Robert William
The Venetian outlaw

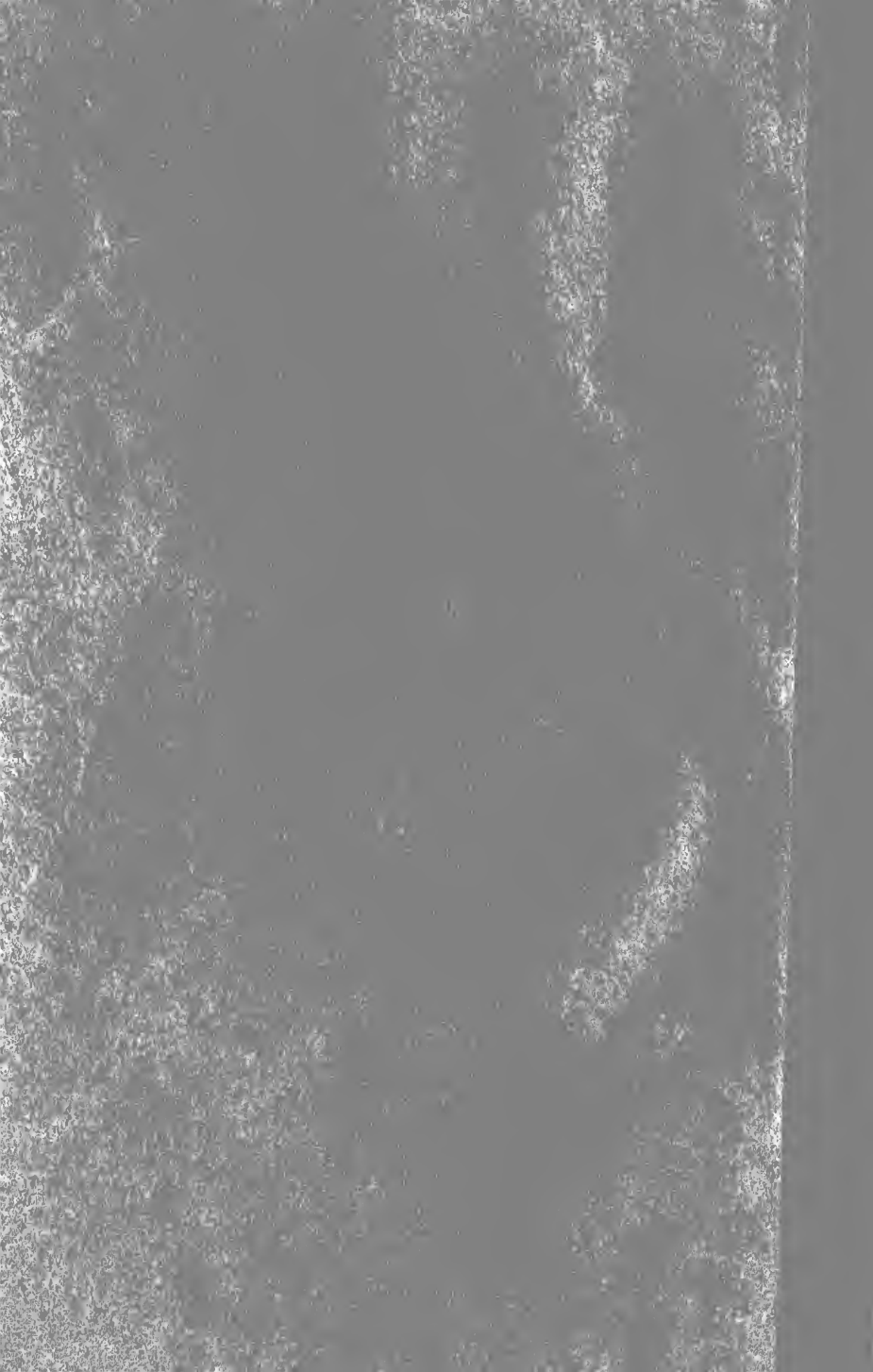
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Dedicated, by Permission,
TO HIS MAJESTY.

THE
VENETIAN OUTLAW,
A DRAMA,

IN THREE ACTS,

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

Translated and adapted to the English Stage

BY

R. W. ELLISTON.

LONDON:

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1805.

[Price Two Shillings and Sixpence.]



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TO THE KING.

SIRE,

IF in acknowledging those acts of condescension and patronage, your Majesty has showered upon me I be thought vain—I must glory in the accusation; for though the proper forms and gradations of society have placed me at that humble distance to preclude a declaration of that respect and regard I owe my King, (except in silent thought and action) can I be blamed if on such an occasion as the present, my nature seeks with an eagerness (liable to the charge of presumption) to unbosom all its feelings?

Permit me then, gracious Sir, to say in the true style of an Englishman

I thank you,

nor can the simplicity of my offering deduct from its sincerity.

The oak (the monarch of the wood) shades the common herbage, yet shall not the grass be despised, though lightly it covers the mould that nourishes its roots.—A feeble aid is what the hand of Providence allows, and offering that, it gives—its all.

The Drama I have the honour of submitting to your Majesty has little claim to your attention, excepting that its leading feature is patriotic ardour. At no time was this principle better understood, or more properly appreciated, than at the present moment.—I wish not however to *hope* the sentiments I have connected with the original piece *can* aid the general cause—no, when honour and justice bid them to the field, Britons need no spur, resolved they go bravely to conquer or to die. Here I pause—but may that Supreme Power, “whose dis-

pensations, though inscrutable, are ever just,"
 view this isle with mercy and protection,
 that your august Family may reign over the
 united kingdoms crowned with peace, plenty,
 and happiness, when the present race shall
 repose from worldly care, and all mortal
 vicissitudes.

With this heartfelt prayer, may it please

YOUR MAJESTY

To accept the unfeigned respect and affection

Of your dutiful

And obedient subject,

R. W. ELLISTON.

13, *North-street, Westminster,*

May 15, 1805.

PROLOGUE.

By Mr. HOLT.

*(As spoken on the first night of performance, the Author's
Benefit.)*

SURE, of all fates the Poet's is most hard,
A certain labour, and no sure reward,
All other trades this constant rule pursue,
The work once done, the workman has his due;
Whate'er the event, still none unpaid we see,
But kill or cure the Doctor has his fee.
Nor is the Lawyer's barren labour lost,
His suit he loses, but he gains his cost:
Not so the Bard—'tis fate's peculiar spite,
That here 'tis only *half* his work to write,
His five acts done, a harder task remains,
To please you all, or else to lose his pains—
To please you all! Heaven help us to the feast,
To suit so numerous, or so strange a guest,
Will the same dish feed this and yonder rows,
Or Critics please, what suits the taste of Beaux?
'Tis said that Greece of old a monster bore,
A beast, a horse behind, a man before,—
They call'd it *Centaur*, or a name as strange,
The like was never seen in yonder change.—
This beast some travellers say was lately caught,
And to our tower might ere this been brought,
But that the keepers could not fix a plan,
To feed a beast, at once both horse and man—

They gave it bread, that wouldn't suit the horse,
 And oats and hay agreed with man still worse ;—
 In short their wit could hit on nothing right,
 The Centaur lost his life, and you a sight.—
 But stay,—in yonder Critic's brow I read,
 Are We this Centaur?—Yes, you are indeed,
 A thing as various and as hard to feed. }
 Will grandams chuckle, where Miss Biddy smiles,
 And law and army class in rank and files—
 Whilst yon spruce gentleman lisps out “ *bravo* ;”
 What shouts of “ *off, off, off,*” from yonder row—
 That this confusion oft has marr'd the scene,
 Declare ye ghosts of plays that *once have been*.—
 This for our Author,—now for one whose breast
 With liveliest sense of gratitude imprest,
 Warm for past favours, yet more warm for new,
 Pants to burst forth in gratitude to you—
 As some rough hind on Essex's barren strand,
 With winter drudgery works th' unwilling land,
 His fruits now nurtur'd by the vernal rains,
 Forgets his labours, as he sees his gains.
 So with the *anxious* actor of to-night,
 Such as he looks around his warm delight,
 He looks around, nor thinks of former toils,
 But hails an ample harvest in your smiles.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

OF THE

VENETIAN OUTLAW.

The Doge	MR. RAYMOND.
The Procurator, Alberti	— LEE.
Count Orsano	— BARRYMORE.
Vivaldi	— ELLISTON.
Alfieri	— POWEL.
Calcagno	— DOWTON.
Carnevaro	— BARTLEY.
Spalatro	— COOKE.
Michaeli	— HOLLAND.

Officers, Guards, &c.

Rosara	MRS. H. JOHNSTON.
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Senators, Soldiers, Masqueraders, &c.

SCENES IN VENICE.

THE VENETIAN OUTLAW.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An agreeable and picturesque Grotto at the extremity of the Palace Gardens.*

[*N. B. There are two avenues—one in the middle, which is the principal, and through which part of the garden is seen—the other on the right, communicating with the palace by a private door.*]

Enter ALFIERI—a letter in his hand.

Alf. (reads.) “A man once honoured with your friendship has important secrets to communicate, repair alone this night, at the hour of eight, to the grotto in the palace gardens.”—From whom is this appointment?—Its mystery bespeaks an enemy rather than a friend.—(*Clock strikes 8*) The hour of the rendezvous, and this the place:

Enter VIVALDI, in a German military habit.

Speak!—who art thou?

Viv. A friend—once known to Alfieri, and by that virtuous senator beloved, valued and esteemed.

Alf. Thy person is still to me unknown—I recollect you not.

Viv. Look on me well,—if years of exile and misfortune have effaced all outward traces—my heart is still the same.—Thy unwearied friendship for my unhappy father can never be forgotten by his grateful son.

Alf. Be quick!—speak!—say—are you—

Viv. Your feelings tell you *who* I am—Yes, Alfieri. In me behold the *outlaw'd* son of Count Vivaldi.

Alf. Come to my arms—Heaven then has heard my prayers, and I again press to my heart the last surviving scion of an injured but illustrious house:—but alas!—this meeting may be dearly bought; even now I tremble for thy safety—You know, perhaps—

Viv. That I'm proclaimed a traitor; a price is set upon the head of him whose heart ne'er panted but in his country's cause, and whose honest arm was never raised but in her just defence.

Alf. But here you brave the malice of your foes; what motive urges this temerity?

Viv. The noblest motive that ever occupied the mind of man—the love implanted in our nature to the soil that gave us being.

Alf. And yet thy country has been unjust to thee.

Viv. True; but still it is my country;—and worthless is that wretch who can, with apathy, behold the dangers of his native land.

Alf. What dangers, and what do you propose?—

Viv. To die, or to obtain the repeal of that unjust decree which proscribed my father and myself—and by a noble effort to unite the safety of my country with my own.

Alf. How is this to be accomplished?

Viv. That persecutor of my family, the Count Orsano, is at the head of a vile conspiracy, whose object is the death of the Doge, and that of many illustrious senators. The time, the place, and execution of this dire tragedy are now subservient to my will and pleasure.

Alf. Thine, Vivaldi ! thy will and pleasure ?

Viv. Start not, but grant me your attention. Soon after that decree which exiled us from Venice, we took refuge in Sicily, where, alas ! my father fell a victim to his grief.—Scorning to linger out my life in solitary inactivity, I offered my services to Charles the Fifth ; as a soldier of fortune, by the name of Walstein, I fought under him in various countries, a rash and desperate courage procured me the notice and favour of the monarch.

Alf. Your purpose dawns upon me.

Viv. 'Twas now that the Venetians sought an officer to lead their troops sent to the assistance of the Duke of Savoy—the Emperor offered me to their acceptance—I fought their battles, and with conquest crowned, laid my laurels at their feet :—As Walstein, remunerating honours were poured upon me by the applauding senate—upon me, their victorious general, the deliverer of their country ; yet, as Vivaldi I was doom'd to roam a wandering exile, or on a public scaffold meet an ignominious death !

Alf. But the conspiracy ?—How form'd and by whom ?

Viv. In this embarrassment there fell into my power a messenger dispatched to Abelino, a leader of banditti, a man fearless and ferocious, the freebooter, the terror of Italy, by him I learnt the treachery of Orsano, and that the time fix'd to

strike the final blow was the birth-day of the daughter of the Doge.

Alf. Unhappy Venice!—how near the crisis of thy fate!—to-morrow celebrates the birth-day of Rosara.

Viv. He bore a letter which inclosed a ring, the intended passport of Abelino to the confidence of the conspirators; possessed of their intentions I promised the messenger pardon unconditional,—together with rich rewards—provided he would deliver Abelino into my hands.—He consented, proceeded with the letter, conducted him towards Venice by unfrequented ways, where he was intercepted by a party of my soldiers, and lost his life by rash resistance.

Alf. He met the fate his bold enormities long merited;—a grateful nation should reward the deed.

Viv. His death, tho' not intended, suggested my present project; trusting that years of unabated sorrow and military hardships, aided by the improbability of my return, would prevent all recognition. I left my troops, arrived here last night, presented myself to the Doge, as his victorious General Walstein, and was received with such distinguish'd marks of favour as successful soldiers meet from grateful princes. But how shall I describe his feelings, his amazement when I disclosed the conspiracy, and pledged my life if he confided in my discretion to frustrate the design, and subvert the malignant operations of his enemies.

Alf. How can you fulfil this hazardous engagement?

Viv. In this grotto the conspirators are to meet, during the banquet which precedes the fête; the

intricacies of the palace are known to me, and furnish'd with Orsano's letter and the ring, I shall present myself to them as Abelino?

Alf. Wherefore not instantly arrest Orsano as the chief conspirator?

Viv. Would that be effectual? No—'twould be only a branch lopt off; one head of that destroyed which, Hydra-like, teems with a multitude.

Alf. Heaven direct thy ways, and crown thy virtuous purpose with success.

Viv. If I succeed, I save my country, revenge my father, restore my honour, and regain my wife.

Alf. Your wife!

Viv. 'Tis true, this union has been kept secret even from you my most respected friend; but now I view you as the father I have lost, even this the dearest object of my heart, shall be disclos'd to you: yes, Alfieri—I am the husband of Rosara. The story of my love might pall e'en on the ear of friendship,—let this suffice. Orsano inspired with an equal passion for Rosara, resolved to work the ruin of a favor'd rival. Accused my father and myself of treason, forged proofs which wore the face of truth, and we were condemn'd unheard.

Alf. Villain!—Villain!!!

Viv. Mov'd by my despair, Rosara consented to a secret marriage; but compell'd by her intreaties, as yet the bridegroom's joys untasted, I flew to rejoin my father, and bade adieu to this once cherish'd spot.

Alf. Knows she of your return?

Viv. No!

Alf. — But when—you meet—

Viv. — Fear not—we *have* met—She knows me not—Prudence has kept me silent—lest in the transports of our joy, unguarded fondness might betray us, yet love at length is victor. This letter informs her, that her husband lives, further I dare not divulge; may I commit it to the friendship of Alfieri?

Alf. Can Vivaldi doubt my zeal to serve him—but yet beware, my friend—consider deeply the perils that surround you.

Viv. The shield of justice will protect the innocent.

Alf. Yet as Vivaldi, reflect, the decree of death is still in force.

Viv. I know it good Alfieri, as Walstein too I am in danger from the daggers of the conspirators—as Abelino, I am expos'd to suffer with disgrace and ignomony; but if I fall 'twill be in a glorious effort to preserve my prince, and raise a deathless name on the safety of my native land.

Alf. The hand of Providence protect you—I perceive the Doge attended by the procurator Alberti—I leave you.

Viv. Farewell, the different characters I am about to assume will force me into actions you may disapprove; promise to suspend all decision on my conduct till the result be known.

Alf. I promise. [Exit Alfieri.]

Enter the DOGE and ALBERTI—from the gardens.

Doge. Walstein, I sought thee, thou art not deceived, Abelino is at Venice—e'en on the gates of my palace he has affixed this audacious notice.

Vrv. (*reads*) "Doge of Venice, you have been inform'd of my arrival, I meant this intelligence shou'd reach you thro' myself, think not you can prevent the accomplishment of that great design which calls me hither; your death, once resolv'd, a hand unseen will strike the blow, and that will be the hand of Abelino." The daring miscreant.

Doge. Not for myself I fear, did this Abelino aim at my life alone, little wou'd his threats affect me—but when I revolve on all that such a wretch is capable of undertaking, I shudder at the view of those commotions to which devoted Venice is expos'd.

Vrv. The danger claims a firm and powerful opposition, the conspiracy is deeply laid—Abelino, a fearless and intrepid villain, remorseless, fierce, and sanguinary.

Alb. But how defeat his purpose and oppose his menace?

Doge. Each deep precaution must be us'd—give instant orders that the guards be doubled.

Vrv. Hold, my Lord! *your* guards by secret influence may be corrupted—let them be replac'd by *mine*—men practised with me in the field of honor—content with me to share their laurels or to risk their lives.

Doge. What thinks't, Alberti, shall we thus decree?

Alb. The measure is prudent, and worthy of its author.

Doge. Haste then, Walstein, haste, the charge be thine, but remember, generous sir, on thy wisdom, valour, and discretion, rests the safety of the prince and people; our wives', our children's prayers, shall call down blessings on thy head;

and ages yet unborn shall hymn the praises of the virtuous man, who checked bold treason's torrent, and stemm'd the tide of human blood.

Viv. You little know with what propitious hopes I hail the glorious enterprize. I too, have a wife—fair as the brightest of Venetian dames, the thought of whom will nerve this arm with tenfold strength—until the master traitor of this hellish plot fall at my feet, a prostrate suppliant for that mercy which, were *he* conqueror, he lacks humanity to grant. [*Exit Vivaldi.*]

Doge. If success shou'd crown his enterprize, what gratitude shall Venice owe to this illustrious soldier.

Alb. Yet, my lord, to owe our safety to a stranger, humbles the state of Venice, and gives but too much cause for deep regret.

Doge. Yet in the present moment its wisdom vindicates itself—a conspiracy is formed in the very senate, acknowledged within the precincts of my palace, when they who ought to be most interested in its preservation, perfidious, or supine, give neither information nor assistance, a stranger acquaints me with the danger—braves the vengeance of the conspirators, and offers to save the state, or bury himself with me beneath its ruins, so acting, this stranger ceases to be such; the preserver of my country, he becomes my friend, my dearest friend, nor can I thank the man who wou'd undermine a confidence so justly placed.—

(*Going, he meets*

Calcagno, who, seeing the Doge, appears confused.)

What would Calcagno?

Calc. My lord!

Doge. What wou'd you, sir?

Calc. (hesitating) Truly I would—that is—if your grace wou'd give me leave.

Doge. Well.

Calc. Bless me, I came hither in such haste, I had almost forgot my errand—thus it is signor—many of our senators, indignant at the menaces of this assassin, Abelino, request to see you to express their eagerness to shield you from the attempts of this terrible, this determined ruffian, wild as an Asiatic boar, and as unfeeling as a rhinoceros. (*Aside*) Come, that's tolerable for an extempore—as for me, my lord, my life, nay all I possess, is at your service.

Doge. You have my thanks. Come, Alberti—to the palace; at such a crisis let no private interest engage our thoughts, but be the public safety our only care. [*Exit Doge and Alberti.*]

Calc. Well done, Calcagno, methinks thou hast display'd thy genius upon this occasion—'tis strange, that this said Doge shou'd take it into his illustrious noddle to hold a conversation exactly where we gentlemen reformers had resolved to meet—reformers!—that's a vile name, tho' it sounds loftily—members in the opposition—lords of the minority, or something more conciliating and senatorial, methinks, wou'd be more to my humour. It's a fine thing, notwithstanding—that is, if it succeeds; but if it fails, why then, we gentlemen make a very sorry figure. Hitherto my share of the business has been pleasant enough—I lend upon tolerable interest good round sums. I'faith, I believe I have purchased the reversion of the plunder of the bank, the ecclesiastical domains of Saint Marco will be mine, and, egad, I sha'nt think it sacrilege to touch them—but

suppose we fail, my property will revert to the state, and my head to the—lud a mercy upon us—but we won't talk of that now—treason is good at calculation, and usury is a most excellent accomptant, and has a knack of swelling figures to a most enormous magnitude.

Enter ORSAÑO.

Ors. What—no one arrived? ever more tardy—where are our friends?—they shou'd be here.

Calc. With submission, better not.

Ors. Why not?

Calc. The Doge and Alberti, not many moments since, were here in conference, and had not I, with some fertility of fancy; let me tell you, thought of an artifice to remove them, they might have been here still.

Ors. Go seek our friends, say I await them.

Calc. It shall be done—why what a crabbed face our leader wears, it chills one to look on it—methinks he might have thank'd me for my care. Well, well, study for the public good has made a great man forget a private service.

[*Exit Calcagno.*]

Ors. The decisive moment is at hand, and every thing promises success—ungrateful Rosara, soon shall you feel the vengeance of a slighted passion! thy most unjust disdain, by which eight tedious years have been embitter'd, steels every fibre of my heart 'gainst pity—'tis not enough, that thro' the banishment of thy Vivaldi I have stabb'd that cold inexorable bosom—thy death, and that of thy weak father, can alone complete the measure of my hatred—yes, Orsano!—they both shall die. Ah! how do I despise myself, when I think my

rank and fortune have concurr'd only to make me leader of that desperate band of worthless, discontented men, too easily found in every country, who rally round the standard of revolt, gilding with treason's sophistry their crimes, and drawing into their vortex weaker minds. No matter—the desire of vengeance, deep and direful vengeance, stifles all reflection or remorse, the storm is gathering—to-morrow its thunder shall burst forth, and annihilate my victims.

Enter CALCAGNO, SPALATIA, MICHAELI, and others.

Welcome, gentlemen! I have expected you with impatience—some one to prevent surprise, remain at the entrance of the grotto.

[Exit one of the Conspirators.]

Well, what news? what new members grace our cause...

Mich. Our members multiply; thro' every quarter of the city I have extoll'd your moderation, your courage, your noble and disinterested views, and have found with pleasure the minds of the people inflam'd against their rulers.

Ors. 'Tis well.

Cal. Well, 'tis excellent.

Ors. Yes, yes, but we delay too long.

Cal. No doubt on't, I said so, I have always said that we delay too long.

Ors. You know that Abelino is at Venice—expert, bold, and faithful—he is the fittest instrument for our purpose—he is prodigal, 'tis true, but this is not the hour of parsimony—he must be supplied.

Mich. He shall have enough, we are rich in re-

source—do we not command the purse of the usurer Calcagno?

Cal. Banker, gentlemen—banker if you please.

Enter CANEVARO, hastily.

Can. My friends, I fear we're lost.

Cal. There—I thought so. I knew we should be lost.

Ors. (coolly.) Speak; what hast thou heard?

Can. At least 'tis certain we are suspected.

Cal. How! suspected—heaven forbid—what will become of us now—I hope they won't suspect me.

Ors. Peace! some false alarm; what proof have you?

Can. The palace guard is chang'd—its numbers doubled, and even now replac'd by soldiers under the command of Walstein.

Ors. Indeed! then we must be alert—Walstein has military talents, energy, and activity.

Spal. 'Tis clear he can injure us, let him be dispos'd of.

Cal. Undoubtedly—exactly my advice—he must be dispatch'd, get rid of him any way.

Spal. By all means, and let that office fall upon yourself.

Cal. No, excuse me there! I did *not* think of that, and had rather you did it.

Spal. It will prove your zeal to the cause—your valour also.

Cal. I don't aim at glory.—Money you shall have to advance your scheme, but I'll have nothing to do with the killing part—it's quite out of my way, you have the knack of it.

Spal. Well, be it my affair then.

Cal. To be sure, every man in his trade, then matters will slip on smoothly.

[*A loud knock is heard at the private door on the left hand—they all stand motionless, and listen with apprehension—a second knock is heard—Orsano, after making signs that silence should be observed, goes softly towards the door.*]

Cal. (*trembling.*) Mercy on us!

Car. What's that?

Cal. (*another knock.*) The inquisitors perhaps—then we are undone.

Ors. Silence dotard. (*another knock.*) Who's there?

Vivaldi answers without. Abelino!

[*Some of the conspirators exclaim, Abelino! and all testify astonishment and satisfaction. Orsano opens the door, and Vivaldi enters as Abelino, with a thick black beard, wild curl'd hair of the same colour, a long cloak wrapp'd round him under which is the habit of a free booter—pistols, &c. in his girdle—forming altogether a stern and most terrific appearance.*]

Cal. (*aside.*) What a ferocious looking dog.

Ors. We did not expect you this evening.

Viv. I know it.—I am ever seen where I am least expected.

Ors. How got you here unobserved?

Viv. (*points to door.*) You see.

Ors. Those subterraneous passages—

Viv. Lead to the palace.

Ors. Who was your conductor hither?

Viv. Conductor! I needed none; each deep and secret avenue I can explore without a guide.

Cal. He looks like a babe of darkness.

Viv. You are the Count Orsano!

Ors. The same. How know you that?

Viv. No matter—here is the letter, and the ring you sent me.

Ors. Proofs are unnecessary. I *see* you as you have been described.—A man, at whose appearance affrighted Florence trembled.

Cal. Whose very beard would give an ague to a continent.

Can. Pshaw ! (to *Calcagno*.)

Viv. I am not a man of compliments. I study not the language of the drawing-room.

Cal. (*aside*.) If you do, your face gives the lie to the master of the ceremonies.

Viv. To business ! Wherefore have you sent for me, and to what purpose ?

Ors. To lead an enterprise worthy your courage ; and to assist in freeing Venice from oppression.

Viv. Ay, ay, you wrote so ; but how to be employ'd ?

Ors. Your name must first spread terror thro' the city.

Viv. It is already done.

Cal. (*aside*.) Or will be, when he shews himself.

Viv. My letter to the Doge effected that.

Can. 'Twas boldly done.

Ors. On you I depend to rid us of the heads of the republic.

Viv. Their names.

Ors. The Doge—the Procurator Alberti—and others I shall point out hereafter.

Viv. To morrow pass'd, and you shall no more fear them.

[*He looks around with mark'd attention on the persons who are present.*]

Are these, the *whole* of your friends ?—are these the members that compose your enterprise ?

Ors. Only a part, the rest are not yet come—but all are staunch, and true.

Viv. Yet it is necessary I should know them *all*.

Ors. Here is the list.

Viv. Are they all mention'd?

Ors. Without an exception.

Viv. Give it me.

Ors. Be careful of it.

Viv. Doubt me not—I mean it.

Ors. Our lives depend on it.

Viv. (*with emphasis.*) I *know* it.

Cal. (*aside.*) Zounds! he knows every thing;
(*whispers Orsano.*) Is *my* name there?

Ors. Certainly.

Cal. And will you let *him* have it.

Ors. Why not? what should we fear.

Cal. Don't be rash, what will not men do to enrich themselves—such ill-looking rogues, are capable of any thing—how do you know what use he may make of it.

Ors. (*aside to Calcagno*) That's true!—(*turns to Vivaldi*) return the list.

Viv. Do you suspect Abelino?

Mich. Till tried all men should be suspected.

Car. As yet you have done nothing to deserve our confidence.

Viv. Command—I am ready.

Ors. Mark then! an action worthy your address and reputation, that will put your constancy to the test is open to you—the death of Rosara, the daughter of the Doge.

Viv. (*aside*) My wife—Rosara?

Ors. Her fatal beauty attaches to her father's party the most illustrious men in Venice—they seek his friendship in hopes of obtaining his

daughter's hand, and his immense possessions—if Rosara die—that hope's destroy'd, and he will be abandoned by his best supporters.

Viv. (*with affected indifference*) With so many other means to ensure success—can a woman's death be of such vast importance?

Mich. What, you hesitate. I then, will undertake it.

Viv. (*recovering his former stern manner*) Think'st thou I shrink—thou mistak'st.

Ors. The task *be* thine Michaeli—on second thoughts 'twere best—you Abelino, have never seen Rosara, and her beauty might palsey even *your* bold arm.

Viv. 'Tis true these hands have never yet been bathed in female blood—but Rosara!—the daughter of the Doge too—methinks *there* I could do my duty.

Ors. No matter, it shall be Michaeli.

Mich. A woman! 'tis too insignificant a task for *you*, something greater befits *your* hand—the Doge for instance!

Viv. Villain! (*aside*) the Doge!—well, be it so.

Ors. It is time to separate; to lull suspicion—let us appear to take our share in the rejoicings; but before we part, let us ratify the solemn compact we have entered into—let us swear upon this sword to be faithful to the cause we have embraced, and to die, or to be deliverers of Venice.

Alb. We swear!

Viv. (*with much emphasis*) Yes, I swear to die, or be the deliverer of Venice.

(*A Conspirator speaks from the Entrance of the Grotto.—Rosara approaches.*)

Ors. Return quickly to the palace—disperse

yourselves different ways—fly *you*, through the secret door.

[They exit different ways, except Michaeli and Vivaldi.]

Mich. I shall remain. (*Muttering.*)

Viv. Wherefore?

Mich. The opportunity must not be lost.

Viv. What do you propose?

Mich. To execute my purpose here.

Viv. Indeed! is there no fear?

Mich. You talk of fear—you, who—

Viv. (*with a pretended ferocious laugh*) 'Twas but to try you.

Mich. Was it so? Know then—I fear nothing—go—leave me—to-morrow you shall hear of me.

Viv. Perhaps to-night.

[Exit, seemingly, by the private door—but darts behind a part of the Grotto.]

Michaeli having turned round perceives the private door open—he conceives Abelino has retired by that passage, and shuts it with caution, looks out and says—“She comes!

[He retires.]

Enter ROSARA. A Letter in her Hand.

Ros. No, I cannot believe this excess of rapture after so long, so cruel a separation—shall I again behold thee, most amiable, the most beloved of men, shall I be permitted to call thee husband—to pour into thy faithful bosom, all the sorrows, all the tenderness of an impassion'd heart, still another day of expectation.—Ah! each moment of the tedious interim will seem an age—but why so much reserve, why not fly to me the instant of his arrival.—Alas! does he not dread

discovery—might he not fear that in the transports of my joy, I shou'd betray our secret.—No—be assured most dear Vivaldi—this heart that languish'd for thy presence, now bounds with transport to receive thee—and longs to clasp thee in these faithful arms.

[She pauses over the letter with tenderness.

Michaeli, advances, and speaks low as to himself.]

Mic. All is safe—now then—or never!

[Michaeli is in the act of stabbing her, when Vivaldi springs out, seizes his arm—wrests the dagger from him, and kills him.]

Viv. Die, villain!

Ros. Oh heaven!

Viv. Silence!

Ros. *(turning—beholds his face with horror.)* An assassin!—murder!

Viv. Thy preserver!

Ros. Help—help—the powers of heaven protect me!!!

Viv. *(holding her)* Be silent, be discreet.—Abelino watches over you!

Ros. Abelino *(with a loud scream, and hiding her face with her hands, several voices, without the grotto, cry this way, this way.)*

Viv. Hark! they come—farewell.

[Pressing her to his arms, while she with horror avoids him, he rushes out at the private door; at that instant the Doge, Alberti, and servants enter.]

Doge. *(exclaiming as he enters.)* What mean these cries? My child!

Ros. *(who has staggered to a pillar.)* Says, My father! oh! my father! he was here, HE.

Dog. Who? }
Alb. Who? } *together.*

Ros. Abelino!

Dog. }
Alb. } Abelino!!!

(Curtain drops hastily.)

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE II.—*The Portico of the Palace.*

ORSANO and CANEVARO—*enter on opposite sides.*

Can. From whence, my friend, proceeds the satisfaction so visible in your countenance?

Ors. Our success is infallible *(with joy.)*

Can. Indeed!

Ors. This letter which Vivaldi has lately sent to Rozara, furnishes the means of turning all suspicion upon him.

Can. Vivaldi at Venice?

Ors. Himself informs us of it.

Can. 'Tis strange.

Ors. By heav'ns 'tis wonderful,—imprudent Vivaldi thou brav'st all dangers; but, presumptuous youth, thy rashness a second time draws the avenging bolt upon thee, nor shall it fall with an unsparing hand.—

Can. How came this letter into your possession?

Ors. 'Twas found near the Grotto, soon after Rosara had been there.—

Can. What is your design?—

Ors. See'st thou not the double triumph the occasion offers, a rival soon removed beyond the fear of further harm, while plausibility shall wrest the meaning of his love-sick phrase, and turn suspicion wholly upon him.—Oh glorious thought! worthy our wrongs and views, a task remains fitting the genius of Abelino; he shall effect an interview with the Doge, and demand the pardon of Vivaldi.—A damning proof of his connexion with the conspirators, and while the troops are dispersed to seek Vivaldi.—

Can. We strike the blow,

Ors. And victory must follow.

Can. Hazardous is the attempt, think you Abelino will risk it?

Ors. Can you doubt him? besides, I shall be present at the interview without his suspecting it, and let him beware he does not deceive us. The Doge approaches, leave us together.

[*Exit Canevara.*]

ORSANO, alone.

Ors. Aid me, dissimulation, till I have spread the net that shall ensnare my destined prey! Triumphant fancy dwells with rapture on the moment, when with undaunted countenance I shall proclaim, "this work is *mine*." If friendship slighted, if ambition thwarted, if love despised be wrongs, shall not I stand acquitted; tho' that soft passion rendered furious by despair, becomes a deep and deadly hate.

Enter the DOGE.

Ors. (to the Doge.) My lord, at this alarming moment, when secret murmurs of conspiracy and vengeance disturb the public mind, when suspi-

cion falls even on the most respected senators—chance, or rather I should say, the interposing hand of heaven, has granted me a proof most incontestible of their integrity; and of the crimes of a man already sentenced by the laws. I lament that to vindicate the innocent and detect the guilty, I must accuse a person justly dear to you, but to the general safety all private feelings must be sacrificed, and I obey the dictates of an imperious duty. (*Giving the letter.*)

Doge. Of whom do you speak?

Ors. That paper will inform you. [*Exit.*]

Doge. [*looks after Orsano with an air of surprise, and opening the letter, exclaims Vivaldi!!!*] (*reads.*) “After eight years of cruel separation, thy faithful lover returns to Venice,” (*with indignation.*) Her lover! “my unsteady hand trembles with excess of rapture while I trace the words *returns to thee*, beloved Rosara; *important reasons* have hitherto opposed my ardent desire to behold you! but you will soon learn how much my love is capable of effecting. Great events are preparing;” (*the Doge musing.*) Great events! “ere two days are past, I hope to have the power publicly to declare the tender ties by which we are united, and obtain the repeal of my unjust proscription.—Implore of heaven to favour the purposes of thy faithful Vivaldi.”

(*The Doge continues.*) This then unravels all—implore of heaven! Impious mockery! It is not to be doubted.—This traitor hopes for the conclusion of his exile, and the success of this love, which I abhor, by means, which Walstein’s care and our own power shall frustrate; yes, these projects shall be defeated. Tremble perfidious Ro-

sara, unworthy daughter! It is *thou* who first shall feel the weight of my resentment.

[*Rosara crosses the bottom of the stage as if in search of something, when she sees her father she appears alarm'd, and exclaims*]

Ros. My father, and a letter in his hand! should it be mine!—(*She is going.*)

Doge. (*turning round.*) My daughter! (*to her.*) Approach, look on this letter, know you ought concerning it?

Ros. (*timidly.*) Sir!

Doge. Answer me! From whom does it come?

Ros. (*terrified.*) Alas!

Doge. (*with increased anger.*) Name him!

Ros. Honour forbids me.

Doge. A father commands thee.

Ros. Oh! Spare me, spare me!

Doge. Is Vivaldi at Venice?

Ros. I have not seen him.

Doge. Disobedient girl! are you aware of the danger you incur by holding correspondence with a criminal, who is every hour liable to suffer by the sentence of the law.

Ros. (*concealing her face and weeping.*) Suffer! dreadful idea! lost Vivaldi.

Doge. And have you no fears of my resentment? when you thus display with matchless confidence, even in my presence, the interest with which he has inspired you.

Ros. Ah! may I not shudder at all those dangers, to which for *me* he is exposed?

Doge. For thee! say rather because he would betray his country; and assassinate thy father!

Ros. He! Vivaldi! He an assassin! His soul abhors such crimes;—he! whose gentle nature, an

eight years cruel persecution, could not stimulate even to deeds of retribution.

Doge. Each concurring circumstance adds confirmation to his guilt.

Ros. You are deceived—the malignant breath of calumny has sullied his fair fame—but let his accusers dread the justice of avenging Providence.

Doge. The decree then which condemned him—

Ros. Was most unjust.

Doge. The proofs ?

Ros. Were forged.

Doge. His accuser ?

Ros. A monster, who in revenge of my contempt, thus persecutes the most *loyal subject*; the most zealous friend of peace and public order; but Time, that slow yet certain minister of justice, who draws from its dark covert the most secret villainy, will finally exculpate my Vivaldi.—That ignominy and disgrace now cast on him, will be transferred to his oppressors : you then, my father, will repent your injustice, but it will be too late ; tho' innocent he will have fallen a victim ; and you, you my father, will have destroyed the life of him, who would die a thousand deaths to hold once more that place within thy worthy heart, of which matchless villainy has cruelly deprived him.

Doge. But what motive impels *thee* to undertake his cause ?

Ros. Every motive human and divine calls forth the wife's exertions in a husband's cause.

Doge. Husband ! Vivaldi thy husband ! sooner would I see thee expiring at my feet, this weapon in thy heart, than behold thee wedded to Vivaldi.

Ros. Strike then, for Vivaldi *is* my husband.

Doge. (with the greatest surprise.) Thy husband!

Ros. O! check that rising frown, my father! 'tis thy suffering daughter that entreats thee! had my gentle mother lived, I had not now wanted an advocate to plead my cause with an offended father—that lamented parent join'd our hands, and seal'd our union with a mother's blessing.—The misfortunes of Vivaldi she knew and pitied, his innocence she never doubted, she meant to reveal the secret of our marriage, when the hand of truth had removed the dark veil of prejudice, and the injured Vivaldi should appear before my father in his native garb, pure, guiltless, and unspotted.

Doge. What! would'st thou make thy departed mother partner in thy guilt?

Ros. (kneels.) As I hope for heaven's forgiveness, and for thine, my father—in her presence was performed the sacred rites that made us one; on that accursed day when Vivaldi's cruel sentence was pronounced; and even at the altar did we part, perhaps, alas! never to meet again.

Doge. Nor shall you ever meet again. I command you to renounce Vivaldi, banish the traitor for ever from thy thoughts.

Ros. Never! (*throws herself at his feet.*) Pardon, my father, but you demand a sacrifice beyond my strength.

Doge. A wretched outcast, a wandering miscreant,

Ros. His misfortunes render him still dearer to me—for *me* he braves the prospect of an ignominious death, and shall I abandon him in the hour of peril?—never! never! never!—

Doge. Will you then cover with shame my few

remaining years, and heap disgrace upon thy father?

Ros. Can I give up my husband?

Doge. Husband! that name awakens all my fury. Remember, Rosara, my sentence may be terrible.

Ros. Pronounce it; I will submit without complaining, (*she clings to him.*) Look not so dreadfully upon me; let these tears, this anguish, wake the father in thee, and plead for pity on his hapless child.

[*During this speech the Doge traverses the stage in the height of anger and agitation, Rosara following him in the most supplicating manner.*]

Doge. (*repulsing her.*) If thou would'st avoid thy father's curse—

Ros. (*oppress'd by her father's anger and overcome with grief, she sinks on a sofa.*) O mercy! mercy!

Enter VIVALDI, as WALSTEIN.

Viv. (*looks at Rosara with great tenderness, and exclaims.*) Good heaven! what's the matter?

Doge. (*with warmth and in agitation to Vivaldi.*) Walstein, you find me here distracted, torn with conflicting passions, listen to the cause; the son of the Count Vivaldi, long since condemned to die who has hitherto escaped the arm of justice, is returned to Venice.

Viv. (*aside, as if he fear'd discovery.*) Indeed!

Doge. Not satisfied with former treasons, and the dishonour of my family, which this letter too plainly reveals, (*shewing him the letter,*) he has joined the discontented faction, e'en now, perhaps,

plotting our destruction, and would doubtless enjoy his victory, tho' raised upon the ruin of his country. Read—

Viv. (aside.) No, it cannot be; all is safe, it is certain now he knows me not.

Doge. So daring an attempt, I see confounds thee.

Viv. I am indeed confounded.

Doge. Thy honest heart can scarce believe it real.

Viv. When great depravities present themselves, I am ever slow in credit, and pity the weakness of our imperfect nature.

Doge. For you is reserved the honour of delivering us from this traitor, employ every means to secure his person; and, if possible, before to-morrow pass, let him, on a scaffold, expiate his crimes.

Ros. (recovering more perfectly.) Expiate on a scaffold—who? Vivaldi? Vivaldi's crimes!

Doge. This prompt execution may alarm his accomplices, and avert the threaten'd storm.

Ros. Ye powers of mercy end this conflict in my breast, or give me death or power to save my husband!

Doge. Promise me then, that to-morrow Vivaldi shall be in my power.

Ros. (rushing towards Vivaldi with terror.) Oh! do not, do not promise.

Viv. (with composure.) I not only promise, I swear it—Vivaldi shall be in thy power.

Ros. Inhuman monster—recall thy oath!

Doge. (to Vivaldi.) Your word is sacred.

Ros. (following the Doge.) Hear me, my father!

Doge. Away—I will not be entreated. [*Exit.*

[*Vivaldi is going out on the opposite side, Rosara follows him.*

Ros. Stay—I beseech you, sir—

Viv. (aside.) Madam—my duty calls me hence, dreaded conflict !!

Ros. Till this moment never did I think a warrior crowned with fame and public gratitude, could seek for *glory* by persecuting the unfortunate, or in pursuing the victims of calumny and injustice: but I deceived myself—I see that there are men who hold all actions to be laudable which aid their selfish and ambitious views. No spark of sacred pity glows within such callous bosoms—the murdered husband and despairing wife, to them are equally indifferent.

Viv. (with embarrassment, endeavouring to avoid Rosara's looks.) Madam, it is to *me* alone the fate of Vivaldi ought to be entrusted.

Ros. How does he merit your hatred ?

Viv. Heaven is my witness, I hate him not.

Ros. Yet you aid the fury of his enemies.

Viv. He is accused of treason.

Ros. Vivaldi guilty of treason?—he whose earliest years were marked with triumph—he, for whose deeds of valour, his country's acclamations have rent the vaulted sky; but, beware, the hero may yet break forth from the dark cloud that now obscures him, and even *you*, who have engaged to drag him to the scaffold, may meet a courage that will make your boasted valour sink beneath his manly arm.

Viv. (coolly.) I do not doubt his valour, madam, nor *fear* his prowess.

Ros. Well, then, *fear* from the despair of an adoring wife—woe to the man who shall consign

him to the fury of his persecutors—his blood shall pay the price of his compliance.

Viv. (aside.) Oh! precious moments—blest recompence for an eternity of pain!

Ros. (with more calmness.) But alas! grief bewilders me; I forgot, that, faithful to your duty, your heart must be as inaccessible to feeling as to fear.

Viv. (forgetting himself.) Think not I blame this tenderness—I shall betray myself, *(aside)*. *(Recovering his former cold manner.)* But I am astonished that, yielding to the voice of reason, you do not strive to forget a man.

Ros. (with the greater feeling.) Forget him! ah no! first must this wretched heart forget to beat! *(with the greatest earnestness)* I conjure you, noble Walstein, sully not the lustre of a glorious life by this cruel action, which, while it dishonours you, will plunge a dagger into my heart—it is no longer an enraged woman, who presumes to threaten vengeance—it is a wife bathed in tears, who renouncing all pride of birth, thus lowly supplicates you to preserve her husband *(kneeling to Vivaldi)*—your generous heart, guarded by pity, will escape remorse—will triumph in beholding those you have made happy—once more on her knees the unhappy Rosara.

Viv. (aside.) Longer to resist her is impossible! *(aloud, and with the most tender tone and action offering to raise her)* beloved Rosara! behold in Walstein that adoring husband.

Ros. (at first repulses him, then suddenly, as if struck with astonishment, exclaims) What said'st thou? can it be? no, no, my eyes deceive me—*(looking stedfastly at him)* it cannot be my lov'd Vivaldi!

Viv. (throwing off his cap, and putting his hair aside from his forehead.) Yes, my Rosara, here behold thy husband, whose sorrows vanish from this blissful moment!

Ros. (throwing herself in his arms.) It is—it must be he—dearest Vivaldi! (From the joy of the moment she repeats his name very loud.)

Viv. Beware.

Ros. Alas! I shall betray you.

Alf. (enters.) Incautious lovers, you will be surprised.

Ros. Oh heaven!

Alf. Calcagno comes this way.

Viv. Fear not, my love!

Ros. Cruel interruption.

Enter CALCAGNO.

Calc. (to Rosara.) Come, this is fortunate, I thought I should find you here. Ah, madam, permit me to convey to you the regret of your friends, who are impatient at your absence, which deprives the fête of its most brilliant ornament—may I flatter myself that you will allow me the superlative honour of conducting you to the scene of gaiety and pleasure? The masks and gondolias are all arrived; the dancers have prepared an elegant performance; every thing promises a superb entertainment. We shall be all life and gaiety, fun, flappets, and finery!

Ros. (to Calcagno.) We'll follow, sir.

Calc. I can't suffer it—never budge before the ladies, madam.

Viv. I take my leave.

Ros. Do you quit us, sir?

Viv. Duty, madam, (*to Rosara in a low voice*) and our safety requires it.

Ros. (*giving her hand to Vivaldi.*) We shall soon meet again.

Viv. (*aside to Rosara.*) The moment it is in my power (*aloud*) I shall be impatient to have the honour of attending you.

(*While Calcagno seems to speak to Alfieri, Vivaldi attempts to kiss the hand of Rosara, but Calcagno returns, which prevents him; he takes the hand of Rosara, and as he leads her off with much ceremony, she turns frequently round to make signs to her husband, but is as often prevented by Calcagno, who in his attentions to Rosara disconcerts both. The ensuing scene ought to be conducted with much haste and mystery.*)

Viv. My worthy friend, I am now in need of thy assistance.

Alf. Speak—

Viv. I must have have an interview with the Doge as Abelino.

Alf. When?

Viv. This night.

Alf. Where?

Viv. Contrive by some means to lead him towards the grotto at the close of the entertainment.

Alf. Will you be there?

Viv. I must.

Alf. Is it not dangerous?

Viv. It is necessary to obtain from the conspirators that unbounded confidence, without which I cannot succeed. Orsano forces me to this step, but it will be fatal to him—for there I acquaint the Doge with the artifice I have made use of; the

names of the conspirators, and the time fixed for the execution of their project.

Alf. But if they should detect you before he is fully informed ?

Viv. I'll hazard every thing, the sight of my Rosara has encreased my ardour.

Alf. The company approaches, rely upon my friendship—

Viv. (*firmly.*) I have already proved it.

Scene changes to another part of the palace gardens—a canal at the bottom—with a low wall or ballustrade, and an opening in the centre to go down to the canal, on which are seen gondolas superbly ornamented, filled with masqueraders, who ascend into the gardens, and form various dances. The gardens are brilliantly illuminated—The DOGE and his suite, ALBERTI, CALCAGNO, ROSARA, Ladies attending her, ALFIERI, ORSANO, other conspirators, &c. arrive successively, and seat themselves to witness the festivities.—During the dances, ALFIERI, disguised in a domino, approaches the Doge mysteriously.

Alf. (*to the Doge.*) Beware—dangers await you—your life depends upon a moment; have you the courage to hazard an interview with one who means to insure your safety ? Dare you dismiss your friends and wait his coming near the grotto ?

Doge. I dare and will—

(*Alfieri glides off—the Doge remains absorbed in thought while the dances continue; at length he rises and departs with his friends, having first com-*

manded (by his action) Rosara to retire ; by degrees the rest of the company disperse—)

Scene changes to a remote part of the garden near the grotto—moon-light—the canal still seen at the top of the stage.—The DOGE enters—

Doge. What can this mean? Each minute new mysteries arise—new dangers present themselves—still I disdain the thought of shrinking, tho' it prove my bitterest foe—and am impatient to behold this person.

(Here Orsano appears among the trees, but not so as to be seen by the Doge, who advances towards the top of the stage, as if he was ruminating on his situation, when Vivaldi disguised as Abelino, suddenly issues from a rude recess, and says.)

Viv. I am that person; *(aside.)* Orsano I perceive observes me, I must change my purpose, and appear the friend of his detested schemes.

(Orsano hastily retires, but Vivaldi's sudden entrance had given him time to observe him.)

Doge. Who art thou?

Viv. I am that mysterious agent who has made all Florence, and even your boasted Venice tremble; and on whom at this moment thy life depends.

(During this whole Scene, Vivaldi at intervals turns his head to see if he is observed—Orsano as often, retires, but not quick enough to avoid being seen at times—and he gives frequent, but silent demonstrations of his approbation at those passages in Abelino's conversation, that are most likely to please him.)

Doge. Abelino!

Viv. The same.

Doge. What seek you here?

Viv. Thee.

Doge. Is it my life thou aim'st at?

Viv. Yes.

Doge. Villain! dost thou not fear the vengeance of offended Heaven?

Viv. No:—for on that earth where vile oppression treads with steps secure—he that bravely ventures in a glorious cause, will meet *protection* from the hand of Heaven.

Doge. Know'st thou not, that by my power I can consign thee to instant punishment;—*nay, immediate death.*

Viv. Thou can'st not—*nay*, thou dar'st not do it.

Doge. Who's there? My guards!—

Viv. In vain you call them.—Thy guards are faithless, thy spies corrupted. Think'st thou I would present myself before thee, had I any thing to fear? In a word, it is you that are in my power—

Doge. In thy power! degrading thought! strike then—

Viv. No, thou yet may'st live.

Doge. Wretch!

Viv. Why that disdainful tone? It is not an exalted station—no not the *imperial purple*, that can give a noble mind; and under this rugged garb perhaps I bear a heart more tender, more generous than thy own.

Doge. Would'st thou compare me to an assassin?

Viv. No:—the assassin dooms his victim to immediate death; his deeds are merciful to thine.

—Hast thou not abused the sacred power that Providence to thee hath delegated, and stretched oppression's iron-hand to wrong the innocent?

Doge. Dar'st thou interrogate me thus?

Viv. Thou hast done this—But I, faithful to my principles, firm in my projects, suffer no consideration of my person's safety—no sense of danger to shake my purpose, vile as you think me.—Abelino, reared to acts of violence, who, did it suit with his design, would seize thy purse or plunge a dagger in thy heart, is guiltless when compared to him who, trained to virtue, and called by his approving country to be the guardian of its laws, becomes the slave of prejudice, and permits the penalty due only to the guilty, to fall upon the head of innocence—

Doge. If thou canst reason thus, and from both good and evil draw the moral inference; and yet pursue a life of rapine, thou art indeed what the world reports thee—a man eccentric as thy name's terrific—

Viv. I would be so.—It is my ambition, that when ages have rolled by—when the ploughshare shall pass over the soil where palaces have stood—my deeds shall be rever'd with retrospective wonder—my name shall still be heard while thine and that of others, who, now with cold contempt behold me, shall be no more remembered—

Doge. Ambition well directed obtains a fame to be indeed desired—Grateful monuments (gifts of a nation's love) are reared, to record to remotest ages the glory of the patriot who saved, or the warrior who died for his country.—But the fame to which thou aspirest, the fruit of daring and successful crimes, will gain thee only an immortality of infamy.—Hear me, Abelino—the con-

spiracy which brings thee to Venice may fail of its expected success. Take my counsel—return to Florence.—I promise thee a full and unconditional pardon—provided thou revealest to me the names of the conspirators, and immediately depart from the Venetian territory.—

(Orsano here gives great attention.)

Vrv. Pardon ! pardon from thee ! thee, who art completely in my power—But where it otherwise—think'st thou the life you proffer could stimulate me to a breach of faith and honour ? No, not all thy boasted Venice can bestow could bribe the outlaw'd Abelino to betray his meanest friend.—Thou desirest me to leave the states of the republic—No ! a powerful interest binds me to this spot—Upon one condition only shall I e'er consent to quit it——

Doge. Name it.

Vrv. (offering a paper.) Sign this paper.

Doge. What does it contain ?

Vrv. The pardon of Vivaldi.

Doge. Vivaldi ! my suspicions are confirmed—
(aside.) Never can I sign Vivaldi's pardon—

Vrv. You signed his condemnation.

Doge. Justice and honour compelled me to the act.

Vrv. Vivaldi is innocent.

Doge. When you become his advocate, the traitor seems doubly guilty—

Vrv. Obdurate man ! dost thou not fear exciting my resentment, when thus you persevere in obstinate refusal ?

Doge. I can smile at the assassin's threats, but shall not act in open contradiction to honour, duty, conscience, and the sacred trust committed

to my care.—To Vivaldi's pardon I never can consent, nor can thy dagger's point enforce it.

(*Vivaldi detains him—the Doge appears alarmed.*)

Viv. Fear nothing; had thy death been my immediate purpose, I should not thus expostulate.—Once more, if future fame and glory be worth thy care, I beseech thee grant me the pardon of Vivaldi.

Doge. Never!

Viv. Well then, I swear never to take rest till I have obtained it! I will not employ violence—yourself shall offer it—you shall proclaim his innocence, and thy own injustice to a wondering world—

Doge. Audacious villain!—this is too much. What, ho! my guards—will no one hear, ah! (*in much agitation.*) Steps, approach—tremble daring ruffian! No longer shalt thou brave me with impunity.

Viv. I leave thee now—but anon thou'll see me when I am least expected——

(*Advancing toward the canal.*)

Doge. (*intercepting him.*) Stay!

(*Vivaldi draws a pistol from his girdle, saying, "Stir not," and fires it off—at the moment of his doing so, a gondola appears, he springs into it and goes off exclaiming.*)

Viv. Farewell! I shall keep my vow.

Doge. And shall such a villain escape unpunished.

Enter ALBERTI with ORSANO, CANEVARO, &c. &c.
and Servants bearing Torches.

Alb. What has happened? you appear alarmed, my lord!

Doge. I am indeed. Would you believe it ! Abelino has been here.

Alb. Abelino ! *(all present testify the greatest surprise).* Astonishing ! every hour procures new proofs of his audacity.

Doge. But now he threw himself into a gondola that seemed to wait his signal, and thus escaped—

(Here the gondola is seen at a great distance, Abelino waving his hat.)—See, see, where he goes, fly Alberti, haste to intercept him—*(Alberti and others go off hastily ; Orsano by a significant motion, giving some of his party to understand, that Abelino must not be taken, upon which two or three of the conspirators accompany Alberti.)*—I know not what to think ! He has inspired a feeling, and an awe till now unknown to me !

Can. Why, my lord, would you expose yourself to this encounter ?

Doge. Think'st thou I could hesitate between my country's safety and my own ? Ah ! no—and surely in her cause I had fallen with glory, tho' by an assassin's hand—

Ors. I must attribute the danger you have incurred to the unbounded confidence you repose in strangers.

Can. To no other cause. Why did not the guards obey your call ?

Cal. That is what I was going to observe ; but you are always before hand with me.

Ors. Why did not Walstein attend the fête ?

Cal. Exactly my remark ; if you had but given me time to make it.

Ors. Let him be summoned to appear before the council, and answer for his conduct.

Cal. Precisely my idea, if you would but allow me leisure to think of it—

Doge. Why, by a premature severity, should we alienate the affections of a man who may be faithful to his duty?

Ors. This measure cannot disgrace him; for, if he be wrong'd by our suspicions, his justification will be public and complete.

Enter ALBERTI.

Doge. Well—Abelino?—

Alb. Has escaped.

Ors. (aside.) I breathe again.

Alb. I saw him dart from the gondola, glide swiftly across the garden, and enter the Palace.

Doge. The Palace!—impossible!—

Alb. 'Tis most certain—hast'ning to that side on which he entered; I called to the guards to seize him, not one obeyed.

Can. No doubt remains. Walstein is a traitor. Believe us, Sir! Dismiss your present guards, placed round you by Walstein, and order his arrest.

Alb. On this act of firmness our's and the general safety may depend.

Doge. The council shall be immediately convened—you, Alberti, take these measures you shall judge most effectual for the arrest of Walstein, and our personal safety.—Let moderation guide your steps—and remember mercy is the monarch's noblest attribute. (*Exit Doge and Alberti.*)

[*Orsano, &c. remain. He collects the conspirators around him and addresses them.*]

Ors. From this our first success, augur we favourably of the future. No longer need we fear resistance from this upstart stranger, since his disgrace is certain. Is not this Abelino an asto-

nishing character? Despising danger, what services will he not render us?

[*To them, enter Spalatro, with a hurried and alarmed appearance.*]

Spal. My friends, you are deceived.

Ors. By whom?

Spal. By Abelino.

Ors. The proof? (*coolly.*)

Spal. Michaeli is murdered!

Ors. Murdered! by whom?

Spal. I was crossing the gardens with the intention of joining you, when passing the Grotto a faint groan reached my ear. I entered and perceived Michaeli, bathed in blood, and in the agonies of death. I called him by his name. He knew me. I question'd him—but he could only point to his wound, and murmur'd Abelino as he expired.

Cal. He's a devil! I would not be alone with that man for all the cash in my coffers.

Ors. Peace!

Spal. You remember how he hesitated when the death of Rosara was proposed to him.

Cal. Yes, *I* remarked that he was agitated.

Ors. It is scarcely to be credited—but if he be false to us, he shall die!—one of you undertake to watch him.

Cal. An excellent thought!—I always said he should be watched.

Ors. (*To Calcagno.*) You, for instance—you will be least likely to create suspicion.

Cal. (*with signs of fear*) I! Lord bless you—I! I'm of such a drowsy constitution, I should make the worst watchman in the universe!

Ors. (*sternly.*) Would you be thought a coward?

Cal. By no means.—But permit me to observe there is a trifling difficulty to watch a man, we should know where he lives, where he goes to—now we know nothing of him—besides, I really must be insured from sleeping.

Ors. No hesitation—Spalatro shall go with you.

Cal. Oh—that—alters the case—I dare say I shall watch well enough in company.

Ors. Let our measures in the mean time be so arranged, that the whole may be executed at the same moment. One of you go thro' the city, and bring an exact account of the different posts. Another to the harbour, and command those captains of gallies, who are in our interest, to be ready to land and join us at the first signal. A third proceed to the arsenal. The governor is our friend, and will supply us with arms. Others must mingle with the Doge's guards, at the gates of the palace, to point out those who are of our party, and prevent the entrance of such as are against us. I shall take my place in council, which meets at ten. At eight, let every one attend to receive my latest orders.

Spal. I undertake to report the situation of the city. [*Exit.*]

Car. I'll to the arsenal. [*Exit.*]

Another Cons. I'll to the gallies.

Cal. I'll—go home to bed.

[*After looking about and perceiving all to be gone, as he hobbles off, Spalatro returns in search of him.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*An Ante-chamber of the Palace.**Enter ORSANO.*

Ors. How slow time creeps! How tedious to my ardent wishes for complete revenge.—My future fate; the colour of my life; nay, life itself, depends on this important hour—and nothing yet performed; none of my emissaries yet returned.—At length—

Enter CALCAGNO.

Oh, Calcagno—thou hast held me long in pain.—Speak—what hast thou heard?

Cal. Your Abelino is a devil—a very devil incarnate.

Ors. You have not then been able to secure him?

Cal. Secure him truly!—on the contrary, he could have secured us had it been his pleasure.

Ors. Explain yourself more clearly.

Cal. He is not alone—there's more of them.

Ors. How know you this?

Cal. I know it to my cost; I have seen, heard and felt them.—

Ors. Will you ever explain?

Cal. Shall I relate all that pass'd?

Ors. (*impatiently.*) Certainly—go on—go on!

Cal. According to your orders, Spalatro and myself approach'd the Palace;—we questioned the sentinels as to the place where they lost sight of

this most interesting gentleman;—they insisted that he had only pass'd the first court, when he disappeared, and must have entered a house in it's vicinity, which the darkness did not permit me to distinguish clearly;—but it is near that of the *Senator Alfieri*. I dispatched Spalatro to watch the back part of this dwelling, and inspired by a daring courage, I took my post in front;—but as able generals never expose themselves unnecessarily, I concealed myself in a corner to make my observations unperceived—snug!

Ors. Well?

Cal. Five hours three quarters, two minutes and seven seconds, did I remain in this blessed state—day began to dawn—and I to despair of success—when a door opened, and I beheld a most terrific figure approaching the place of my concealment.

Ors. Abelino, I suppose.

Cal. No—but probably one of his aid-de-camps, for he stalked towards me, and striking me violently on the shoulder—Begone, old villain, thundered he.—He actually call'd *me—me*, Calcagno, old villain.—Begone—carry this letter to him who sent thee—and warn him, that those who become spies upon our conduct may have reason to repent it.—I was on the point of saying, “Worthy Sir, I am of the same opinion.”

Ors. How tedious!—what ensued?

Cal. Farewell, said he;—and he accompanied this adieu with a still stronger compliment over my shoulders—and disappeared.

Ors. And is this ALL?

Cal. ALL!—and is it not enough—when men of honour and spirit receive such salutations from

rascals—it is rather difficult to endure them ;—but as he first thrashed me as if I had no more feeling than a post, and afterwards made a post-man of me,—I have laboured in my vocation, and brought you the letter as fast as I could hobble.—It was a perilous crisis—and once delivered from this cursed plot I swear—

Ors. (interrupting.) You were not born for glorious enterprizes.—

Cal. It may be so—but I was born to live; and to live long I hope; the trade we follow may make glorious men—but they promise to be short lived ones.

Ors. (opening the letter.) Let me see—*(he reads)*
 “ Count Orsano, you doubt my fidelity, your
 “ suspicions are unjust; for a bribe, Michaeli
 “ would have betrayed us. He merited the death
 “ I gave him.—When you receive this, Walstein
 “ will be no more, we shall meet at the Council.”

“ ABELINO.”

Ors. Walstein ! will he dare attempt it ?

Cal. That he will—he will *dare any thing*. All is fish that comes to his net.

Ors. If he keep his word we shall have no formidable adversary to fear; for I have thought of means to prevent Vivaldi from opposing us.

Cal. I too was ruminating upon that.

Ors. Well, what was the result ?

Cal. No matter—I never declare my plans till they are *perfectly* digested.

Ors. Pshaw ! I have spread reports of Rosara's forcible removal, that will probably alarm his love, and induce him to attempt obtaining entrance to the palace. *There* I shall be prepared for him. Soon shall he expiate, by an ignominious death,

that arrogant presumption, which dared to counteract the love and the ambition of Orsano.

Alf. (without, to the Doge.) Yet hear me, my lord.

Ors. We are interrupted, (*looking out*) go to the port, and execute the important commission already confided to you.

Cal. I was on the point of bringing it to your recollection—but you are so sharp—you are like an almanac-maker, you know every thing before it happens. [*Exit.*]

Enter the DOGE and ALFIERI. (Speaking with warmth).

Alf. (to the Doge.) No, no, my lord, you must not refuse my request.

Doge. The majority of the senate oppose it.

Alf. What—condemn unheard—oh never let our laws become the scoff of after times—drag guilty treason into public view—expose it to the glare of open day, but still let justice, with impartial aim, pursue each motive to its primal source—thus truth shall stamp it with eternal obloquy, or cleanse the victim from its foul reproach.

Ors. May I inquire the cause of so much warmth?

Alf. I would intreat the Doge that Walstein be admitted to justify himself before the council.

Doge. To this request I cannot but oppose the positive opinion of the senate.

Ors. It appears imprudent to consent.

Alf. Sir, I had foreseen your opposition.

Ors. (to Alfieri.) What motive induces you so warmly to defend a man, who ought to be indifferent to you?

Alf. The same motive that induced me to defend the Count Vivaldi from your rancour.

Ors. (confused.) How?—but Vivaldi was your friend, this man is a stranger.

Alf. Some men dazzled by the glare of wealth or power will become champions of the guilty, if so supported; others, inspired by justice and compassion, declare themselves the advocates of unprotected merit whenever they behold it injured or oppress'd, and such, I trust, the difference between the Count Orsano and myself.

Doge. Calm this asperity.

Ors. (aside.) I must dissemble—why use to me such severity of language—to prove my high esteem and firm reliance on your principles, I no longer oppose Walstein's admission to plead his cause before the council—let him be heard. *(aside)* If Abelino keeps his word, you are welcome to this acquiescence.

Alf. (aside.) This sudden change of sentiment conceals some hidden treachery—all is not right.

Doge. (to Orsano.) This moderation gives me pleasure, in every period, in all forms of government, 'tis *unanimity alone* secures a nation's greatness, but especially in times like these, when every thing most dear and sacred to the subject and the citizen, is menaced with destruction—all talents should unite, all jealousies should cease, and then, my friends, you truly will become the pillars of your country. Patriotic senators, I accede to your request, and will sign the order for its completion. *(The Doge approaches the table to write.)*

Ors. (aside.) He dies ere he can defend himself.

Ros. (enters with wildness, and much agitated during the scene, saying as she comes in) Walstein impeached! the senate refuse to hear his justifica-

tion!—(*then enter*) ah, senators, and you, my father, pause ere you commit a crime so fatal, chosen to be guardians of the laws, justice and mercy should be your only counsellors—oh beware! for dreadful is the retribution that awaits you—should envy of his martial glory or private malice devote the innocent to death—tho' here redress may be denied, from their neglected tombs an awful voice will rise and call for vengeance from that tribunal to which the virtuous never can appeal in vain.

Doge. Rosara, what means this frantic rage?

Ros. For you, Count Orsano, to be virtuous is a sufficient passport to your hatred—but will you so far despise all semblance of integrity as to become at once his judge and his accuser?

Alf. (*low to Rosara.*) You know not what you do, this excessive zeal will prove destructive.

Ros. You hope that none will undertake his cause—vain man, to *me* belongs this glorious task, and I shall prove how well I can fulfil my duty.

Ors. Her duty!

Doge. She raves, she knows not what she utters.

Ros. Inspired by the sacred energies of virtuous love, I will present myself before the senate, and proclaim his wrongs—eight years of suffering, his past and present services—*all, all* will plead for him, and even his calumniators shall shrink back appall'd, and own the loyalty of my most injured husband.

Doge. Husband!

Alf. What have you said?

Ros. Why should I fear to own it? Walstein or Vivaldi equally endangered, why should I hesitate to assert the injustice of the senate, who doomed to death the same Vivaldi to whom as Walstein—

Doge. Walstein—Vivaldi!
Ors. Vivaldi—Walstein!

An OFFICER enters.

My lord, a rumour goes that our general Walstein is assassinated.

[*Rosara screams, and sinks into the arms of Alfieri.*

Doge. Walstein assassinated! can it be true? this demands inquiry—follow me.

[*Exit all but Rosara and Alfieri.*

(*As Orsano follows the Doge he says*) dauntless Abelino then thy work is done—my vengeance is complete.

Alf. (to Rosara) Madam, in the name of heaven, restrain this wild emotion, the report is false, spread by your husband to insure his projects.

VIVALDI enters hastily.

Viv. Where is Rosara?—is it true that—? (*seeing Rosara*) My wife!—my love—look up, Rosara! Rosara!

Alf. Fly, fly Vivaldi, or you are lost for ever.

Viv. And leave her thus—never! never!

Ros. (*recovering.*) My husband art thou safe? alas! I tremble to see thee here—why, why didst thou venture?

Viv. Your father means to force thee hence, and canst thou ask why thy Vivaldi comes to save thee?

Alf. That report was a mere artifice of that arch fiend the Count Orsano.

Viv. Oh, too successful artifice—the fear of losing thee has drawn me from my secret retreat,

when it was necessary, as Walstein, I should be known no more.

Alf. Perhaps, 'tis not too late, you yet are unobserv'd.

Ros. Fly, dear Vivaldi, your death is decreed—fly, and rely on my unceasing love to save or perish with thee.

Viv. Do you desire it? Must I leave you?

Ros. I entreat—I implore it. (*offering to embrace.*)

Viv. We shall meet again. Farewell, farewell. (*they embrace.*) The guardian God of innocence protect thee.

[*At the instant Vivaldi is departing, Orsano enters with soldiers and arrests him.*]

Ors. You are our prisoner.

Ros. Oh, heav'n!

The Doge enters.

Doge. (*meeting Vivaldi.*) Walstein here? rash man, what strange temerity has led thee hither?

Viv. What should the guiltless fear?

Doge. Ambitious man, thy projects are understood.

Alf. (*to Orsano.*) You, sir, who but a few moments since united your voice to mine, and vowed he should be heard—will you suffer—

Viv. Silence! good Alfieri—you but intreat in vain—the scale of justice can never preponderate on the side of mercy when the beam is entrusted to a villain's hand.

Ors. Honour forbids.

Viv. (*with pointed irony.*) Honour, prostituted term! Honour and Orsano cannot bear connection.

Ors. Rail on—it is the privilege of guilt detected.

Doge. Lead him to a dungeon—

Alf. If that's effected, he is lost for ever.

[Exit ALFIERI.]

Ros. Oh, my father, revoke this cruel order.

Viv. Despair not, dearest Rosara.

Ros. When every thing combines to aid the fury of thy enemies, who can protect thee?

Viv. Heaven!—

Ros. And Rosara, (*rushing to him.*) who would resign her life with transport could it save thine.

Doge. (*to the guards.*) Separate them, drag him hence!

[*They force them asunder as she clings to him.*]

Ros. I will not leave him—barbarous men! restore me my husband. (*to Orsano.*) Oh! you triumph!

Viv. Not yet—take courage—*Providence* may still protect us.

[Exit, guarded:]

Ros. Away; hold off your hands!

Doge. Heed not her idle rage—convey her to her apartment—

Ros. Hear me, father—and you, (*to the guards.*) respect the daughter of the Doge. (*they retire.*) (*To the Doge, solemnly.*) You have torn me from my husband, but death alone shall force me from this spot.

Doge. This is madness.

Ros. Love, connubial love has fixed my station here.—If his judges have the common feelings of humanity, if they have hearts my grief will soften them. Yes, I shall save my husband!

Ors. Your hope is vain.

Ros. I had forgot that *you* were of the number.

Ors. Listen, madam, to the dictates of your better reason.

Ros. Approach me not, monster; (*drawing a dagger.*) I have already said.—Death only, or the pardon of my husband shall remove me hence.

[*Trumpets sound.*

Doge. Remain then;—this is no time for contest, the senators are here.

[*Exit Doge,*

[*Trumpets again.*

Ros. (*being left alone.*) Power supreme, (whose dispensations, tho' inscrutable, are always just,) Oh, grant me to support this awful trial; proportion my strength to the difficulties that surround me and oppress my feeble frame.—Thus having perform'd my *duty*, with cheerfulness and resignation I bend myself to thy decree.

[*Folding doors open to the grand council chamber.*

DOGE, ALBERTI, and Senators, Conspirators, &c.
discovered.

Doge. Senators—Vivaldi is at Venice—Vivaldi the traitor—he whom you have so justly punished for his former crimes; he again dares to pass our gates, and pollute our ears with murmurs of complaint—with consummate art, with unparalleled address he has assumed the character of Walstein, and in this disguise has joined the members of a dangerous conspiracy, the existence of which is fully proved. I have caused him to be arrested, his fate the senate must determine.

Ors. Vivaldi merits death both from his treasons past and this his present crime.

Several Sen. Doubtless, doubtless.

Several Sen. Death! Death!

Ros. My lords, there is another victim, more guilty still than even your devoted, poor Vivaldi.

Alb. Another victim?

Ros. Yes—Rosara!

Doge. You!

Ros. Yes *I*, Rosara—great Doge pronounce my sentence—the doom will be receiv'd with transport that issues from a father's lips.

Doge. Take her hence—grief has o'ercome her reason!

Ros. The senate must not be partially severe; Vivaldi is my husband, the noble ambition by which he is actuated, his views and the virtuous source from which they flow, equally animate the heart of his Rosara—of his return to Venice *I* am the cause and motive. If to be great and good is tortured into crime amongst you, then is my hero guilty—I am guilty too! and the same punishment, the same malignant vengeance should fall on husband and on wife.

Doge. Senators, beseech you, regard not the ravings of a frantic woman who would hazard life itself to save a worthless traitor. (*shouts are heard.*) What means that tumult? (*trumpets and shouts.*) Enquire the cause. [Messenger goes out.

Ros. (*shouts repeated.*) Your judgment, lords! Pronounce upon Vivaldi and Rosara.

[*Shouts continued.*

Mess. (*returns to the Doge.*) Those shouts, my lord, proclaim'd Vivaldi's liberty.—

Doge. His liberty!

Mess. Just as he reached the prison gates a troop of armed men rushed suddenly upon the guard, and inflamed and encouraged by a member of the senate, forc'd them to disperse, and bore Vivaldi off in triumph.—

Ros. Then, (*falling on her knees exultingly.*) heaven is just and succours the oppress'd.

Doge. Who is this senator who thus defies the laws?

Enter ALFIERI.

Alf. (*with dignity.*) Alfieri!

All. (*with surprise.*) Alfieri!!!

Alf. I grant my conduct calls for explanation: from early youth the father of Vivaldi was my valued friend; I knew him to be clear of the foul charges brought against him, yet did he sink unaided—his son partook of my affection, he is threaten'd with his father's fate. I know him to be honourable—his heart is pure, his conduct irreproachable.—It was my duty to preserve a dear and noble friend, and by protecting *him*, to save my country from the guilt of sacrificing the man who fought her battles—brought conquest to your gates—and plac'd your state of Venice on that high eminence where now she stands.—

Ros. Generous Alfieri!—virtue has one mediator still left among you.

Doge. Rash and mistaken man—your age should teach you something better than this specious sophistry—think you the senate will allow this outrage to remain unpunished?

Ors. Order that Alfieri be detain'd.

[*A noise without, Vivaldi as Abelino enters with his troops.*]

Viv. Ay! let none retire—all *must* remain.

Doge. Abelino!

[*They all testify those emotions of joy or fear, adapted to the feelings of the different parties.*]

Viv. (*to the Doge.*) You see I am faithful to

my word; I wrote to you that all precautions would be vain, and that I could assail you when you would least expect it;—here then in your very senate am I come to execute my threat.

Doge. Villain! thy callous mind defies the vengeance of insulted justice, because it is delayed—but it will at length overtake thee.

Viv. (*looking to the conspirators significantly.*) It will overtake *others first*.

Ors. (*aside.*) Now let my proud victims tremble, my triumph is secure!

Some Senators of the party rise.—

Sen. Let us not be tamely butchered, but meet our fate like men.

Viv. (*drawing out a pistol.*)—The first that moves will meet his death. (*turning towards the conspirators.*) Count Orsano, my noble associate, is all prepared?

Ors. Yes—proceed.—

Viv. (*to the Doge.*) You see I am in sufficient force, small is the resistance I have to fear.—

Doge. Can this be possible?

Viv. Attend in silence.—Orsano and you, illustrious champions in a glorious project, declare yourselves, without reserve, point out your destined victims.—Abelino is ready in support of the *just cause*.

Car. The present Doge shall be deposed—and here, we appoint Orsano to succeed him.

Cons. Orsano! Orsano shall be Doge.

Alb. Orsano! never shall a traitor fill the senatorial chair!—

Ors. Force then shall decide—[*to the conspirators*] follow my example. [*draws his poignard.*] &c.

Doge. [*with fortitude.*] Strike! Traitors, strike!

[Rozara and Alfieri interpose.]

Viv. Hold!—one moment's pause;—[*placing himself between the parties*] [*to the Doge*] you now perceive, great Sir, the fate of your far famed Republic, and your own depends on *me*—on *me*—the out-law'd son of Rapine—the proscribed Abelino!—[*turning to the conspirators.*] My brave associates, your courage meets my expectation;—you shall now receive the recompence you merit. [*turning towards the Doge's party.*] The soldiers—to your duty—you already know your charge—your victims, whose crimes not even signal punishment can expiate—who, but now exulting in imaginary safety, long to drench their daggers in the blood of innocence.—I say—Seize on—these Traitors. [*turning quickly round to the conspirators, whom the soldiers bursting from all sides of the Senate, instantly arrest.*] While I in form more dreadful than the stings of conscience, or the murderer's remorse, to the tortured fancy of such miscreants, present their deadly foe—the wrong'd Vivaldi! [*throwing off his disguise.*]

Sen. and Cons. Vivaldi!

Ros. My husband!—[*falling on his neck.*]

Viv. Count Orsano—upon you depends the restoration of my father's fame;—your dark designs procured his banishment.—Confess that you have wronged him—your fate is in my power—do justice to his memory—if thy own life be worth preserving.—

Ors. I will not be interrogated! conduct me instantly to death!—[*Exit guarded, Cons. &c.*]

Doge. Generous Vivaldi!—can the Republic e'er repay the vast, vast debt of gratitude she owes thee? and can thy noble nature in oblivion

bury the rank injustice, which malignant envy heaped upon thee?

Viv. Friend to Alfieri—son to *you*—husband to Rosara—*PRESERVER OF MY COUNTRY*;—can earthly happiness be more complete?

Doge. Then let a father's blessing crown thy love; and all thy future joys be shared amidst the applauding honours of thy grateful country.

Viv. Propitious moment!—when the heart prompts the hand to perform such acts as honour dictates, and as virtue sanctions, the voice of approbation, is the cordial balm that cheers the mind, and leads it on, to deeds of future Glory.—

END OF THE DRAMA.

EPILOGUE.

By Mr. CHERRY.

THE conflict o'er, and safe the best of men,
My tears I've dry'd, and am—myself again;—
But why our Author shou'd *my* shoulders goad,
With the strong pressure of his tragic load,
Extracting *start* and *whine*—and mournful *oh*!
And all the essence of theatric woe,
From *me*—" unused to the melting" sigh,
Who *live* to *laugh*—but seldom wish to *cry*;—
Whate'er *his drift*—here let the matter pause,
In *laugh* or *cry* I seek but your applause.

My patriot spouse—tho' alien to the laws,
Long brav'd all dangers in his country's cause;
To gain a wife, and save a falling state,
He smil'd at peril, and he courted fate:
Few wives, like me, wou'd pity his disgraces,
Or plead a husband's cause, who wore—*three faces*!
And yet I've heard—but doubt the censure true,
Most modern husbands fam'd—for wearing *two*:
Well, be it so;—our sex need never roam,
When sweet variety is found *at home*!—

Shou'd *my* good man, *Vivaldi*, shew his airs,
" My dear," says I, " I'll qualify those cares;
" Brave *Walstein* loves me—" (the creature sighs—)
" But *ABELINO* is the youth I prize!"
Then ladies, thus, pray serve your *two-fac'd* fellows,—
No husband, of *HIMSELF*, can e'er be jealous:
This, the grand secret 'twixt the man and wife,
Good-humour, vary'd, is the *balm of life*.—

[Ha, ha, ha!—O lud!—O lud!]

Men are but fools with all their boasted sense!
With solemn nonsense all their plans commence;
Confed'rate schemes in holes and corners brewing—
But *WOMEN only* can a nation ruin!—

What say you ladies to a *little treason*?—
 A *plot* I mean—to bring the men to reason :
 If once conspiring, with digested plan,
 We'd soon reduce the boasted pride of man;—
 But hold;—before we *openly rebel*—
 'Tis just the nature of our claims to tell :
 IMPRIMIS:—*Pin-money*:—must be *double* :
Routs and *Gala's*—ne'er consider'd *trouble* :
 Our *tradesmen's bills*:—why—let our husband's pay;
 Or let 'em wait—and call another day :
 Our *hours*—tho' late—nay, chang'd from day to night,
 From night to day—admit no question'd right :
 And if on these *plain terms* we can't agree,
 A *sep'rate maintenance* must set us free ;
 But if it changes still from *bad* to *worse*,
 These claims alone are subjects *for divorce*.

What say you ladies, will you join with me,
 And make one glorious effort *to be free*?—
 Success is *certain*—and, when *ours* the day,
 We'll shew with what meek mercy we can sway ;
 Nor add the pride of conquest to our charms,
 But to the vanquish'd wretches yield—*our arms* !—
 Men *can* be grateful;—but if not—why then,
 A *gen'ral muster*—and *REBEL* again !—

Bless me !—quite forgot the Poet of the night;—
 I left him truly in a piteous plight:—
 He bade me say—(but I'm a giddy creature)
 I knew not what—*it rests with YOUR GOOD-NATURE*:
 His three-fac'd *out-law*—tho' a bold endeavour,
 He trusts—will not *out-law him* from your favour ;
 Already strongly did I plead his cause,
 But lest your judgment on his fate shou'd parse,
 O let his sentence be—your kind applause.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE PUBLIC.

ABELINO le grand Bandit, ou l'Homme à trois Visages, was put into my hands by Mr. Bingley, jun. N° 20, Carburton-street, who travelling through Brunswick, saw it performed at the Duke's Theatre, and thought an English translation might be made effective.—I mention this circumstance, because I hear other productions from this subject are in being, and I choose to mention the source from whence this drama springs. In adapting the translation to our stage, I was careful not to alter the original form, the chief merit of the piece consisting in a rapid succession of interesting situations, some of which I think have been heightened.—The foreign dress was quaint and spiritless, and declamation (the favourite of the French stage) abounded; the latter I have considerably expunged, the former I *endeavoured* to adorn.

The execution does not satisfy me, but hereafter I may propose something better.

To Mr. Cherry, who (after it had been read in the Green Room) offered some valuable alterations, I am considerably indebted, and I embrace most willingly this opportunity of publicly acknowledging the readiness of his talent.—I am further obliged to him for the Epilogue.

It is impossible to vary the mode of thanking the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Theatre for their aid, and yet the omission of it from one of the Corps Dramatique would be obnoxious to misconstruction, and I *really feel* most truly obliged by every assistance afforded me.

Mrs. H. Johnston distinguished herself considerably—and both hands and eyes have declared it.

Benefit Plays (new ones I mean) are held in such weak estimation, that even the diurnal prints scarcely deign to remark upon them, and the Public, who expect nothing on such occasions, because they conceive the Managers would not refuse any thing that had pretension to attention, are uninterested—hence arises a disadvantage of serious moment, for not to be spoken of, is of all slights the worst.—A modern successful writer is said to have exclaim'd in the outset of his literary life—" I must starve on sullen indifference, *abuse me, abuse me or my fortune is marr'd ;*" he was right, for discussion of every kind tends to develope the truth, and though

great defects may be discovered, still a gem, if it exist, is not buried in neglect.

The audiences who were at the representation of the Venetian Outlaw are my witnesses of the unanimous applause it met with.

The Critics will decide on its claims.

13, North-street, Westminster,
May 11, 1805.

* * * A few hours before this play was ready for publication, another translation impudently asserting to be the one "now performing at Drury-Lane Theatre," has been shewn to me. The Public have been cautioned in advertisements to avoid this fraud, and I hold it unworthy to give any celebrity to impertinence by dwelling on the subject. However, that my work may not be bastardiz'd on a cross breed, I merely submit the following note from Mr. Graham :

"DEAR SIR,

"Do not permit the insinuations thrown out in the advertisement to another translation of "Abelino le grand Bandit, &c." to have any weight; recollect that similar circumstances have occurred before. I am ready to declare on oath that you never saw, or could have the slightest knowledge of, the piece published by James Powell.

Your's,

Bow-street, May 15, 1805.

"A. GRAHAM."

FINIS.





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Elliston, Robert William
The Venetian outlaw

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